

Often, Always

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Often, Always

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Summary

"I've had a crush on you since tenth grade," he admitted in a whisper, and the sound Hannibal made had Will leaning deeper into their next kiss, letting go of Hannibal's hand to set both of his to his face instead, turning in his seat to shove his knee against the back of the bench so they were face to face.

Will Graham has had a crush, a crazy crush, on Hannibal since high school, but he never made a move. Why would Hannibal be interested in someone like him?

Hannibal Lecter has had a crush, a mad crush, on Will since high school, but never made a move. They're worlds apart, why would Will look his way?

Notes

A gorgeous little fluffy piece for the glorious Cookie! She requested a ficlet of pining and longing that chased the boys from high school into college, culminating in first times :3

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Hormones rarely overran Hannibal to the point of madness. Rarely, but as unique as he was in other aspects of his being, he was still a red-blooded young man of sixteen and he had urges. Certainly ones he could control and take care of discreetly, but once in a while he found himself so overwhelmed he forgot how to breathe, let alone where to put his hands to keep his very obvious erection hidden from view.

Often, this happened around Will Graham.

Always, this happened around Will Graham.

Will Graham and his untamed curls, and his wide blue eyes behind his frankly nerdy glasses, and his smile. God, that kid's smile. It dimpled his cheeks and narrowed his eyes and made his ears twitch just a little and it was the most endearing thing Hannibal had ever seen.

They hadn't talked much, not really. In truth, they had little to talk about. They were classmates, they shared mandatory classes, but beyond that Hannibal's world was far removed from the one Will lived in. They were friendly, they had no reason not to be, but they weren't close. And Hannibal found himself often wondering *why* and how to change that.

Will had no hobbies, or none that were obvious. He didn't stay after school for activities. He didn't attend games or dances. He slipped from class to class, a ghost of a thing, and there was nothing Hannibal could see that might connect them.

A project, once, in Biology. Will had spoken seldom, and softly, passing notes and answers back and forth at the lab table. Meeting once, just once, in the library after school.

But nothing more. No chance encounters. No assignments that might push them together again.

The boy lived inside Hannibal's head, and drove him crazy, but he might as well have not existed at all, for all they'd ever spoken.

Hannibal Lecter was the sort of boy teachers described as "going places." He won awards for his grades. He ran track as though running was *fun*, and not something ridiculous they were forced to do in PE. His clothes were always neat and tidy, his notes written in a perfect hand.

In contrast, Will was the sort of boy teachers described as "a bit of a mess."

And in truth, he *was* a bit of a mess. Will wasn't a bad student but one only knew that if they saw his grades. On the outside he looked like a scruffy unkempt thing, most likely into weed and indie video games no one had heard of. Only one of those assumptions was accurate, and Will wouldn't tell which. His home life wasn't great either, but Will consoled himself with the fact that nobody's was, regardless of what they wanted the rest of the world to think. Sometimes he had to help his dad with jobs after school. It wasn't a big deal.

Will was a daydreamer, he didn't participate much in class, he was content to sit in the back of the room with a book under the table or staring into space as the teachers droned on and on at the front of the room. He was interested. He was. Just not in the class.

The problem with being 'a bit of a mess' was that he was often forcibly paired with the boy who was 'going places' throughout 11th grade. And it wasn't that Will *minded* it so much, he was sure that of the two of them Hannibal was far less happy to be paired with Will than Will was to be paired with Hannibal, but the boy was *distracting*.

Will could read people far too easily, he'd done it for as long as he could remember. It kept him out of trouble as often as it brought trouble right up to him. But Hannibal... Hannibal was unreadable to Will. He was fascinating, like a book written in a different language that Will kept trying to read and failing. He hated that. He hated that the blonde sharp-featured boy was so elusive, and he hated that Hannibal most likely didn't know he was.

And it wasn't as though Will couldn't *talk to him* and figure him out, you didn't *do that* in high school. You grunted and shrugged your way through until you were free and in college. And in college you had alcohol to help. But he wanted to know him. He wanted to know Hannibal's tells and ticks, wanted to know what he enjoyed and why he acted so stuck up in a school where it really didn't warrant it. He wanted to know how Hannibal's hair looked when it was mussed in the mornings instead of carefully combed for school. He wanted a great many things.

Will was used to not getting what he wanted. It came with being a bit of a mess, with being a bit down-on-your-luck, a bit poor. He had spent most of his life not getting what he wanted, one more thing wouldn't kill him.

But oh, he wanted so *badly*.

Will Graham came back from summer vacation tanned all the way down past the tempting open collar of his shirt. Hannibal heard he'd spent the summer working on boat repairs with his dad. He wasn't sure if that was true. He didn't care.

What he cared about was what the calloused tips of Will's fingers would feel like against his skin. If he would taste as sun-warmed and beautiful as he looked. If he would let Hannibal take him apart. If he wanted to take *Hannibal* apart.

12th grade was when Hannibal's hint of a crush slipped over into obsession. When he dreamed of tanned skin, of parting trembling thighs to fit himself between them.

Sometimes, he woke having already lost himself, his boxers cooling unpleasantly against his skin.

In class, he would sit beside Will, because neither seemed to mind the proximity, though they hardly shared more than ten words a lesson that weren't to do with their schoolwork. That didn't matter. Because he was near enough to let his eyes trace the way Will's hair curled just behind his ears, near enough to breathe in the clean, warm smell of him that always had an underlying hint of dogs and oil.

Sometimes, as Will surreptitiously read beneath his desk, Hannibal would just as sneakily sketch the boy next to him. Hannibal's notes in biology and history were filled with half-finished sketches of Will Graham; studies of his jawline, where stubble had just started to dust the skin, his eyes, the way his mouth had a natural upward curl. His hands, Hannibal often sketched his hands. Holding a pencil, a beaker, the page of a book. Rough hands, worker's hands, beautiful hands.

If Will ever noticed how captive he held Hannibal in class, he never once said a word. Nor did he move away to another seat. He'd started to keep his bag on Hannibal's desk if he was in class first, assuring himself the company.

Just before graduation, when talk came to college and future pursuits, both had plans for Johns Hopkins. Hannibal achieved a full scholarship. Will applied for full housing subsidies and prepared himself to work the entire summer until freshman year.

Neither had the courage to ask the other for a phone number, or an email, when they were signing yearbooks.

Both counted the days until they started college; Will elbow-deep in boat grease, Hannibal diligently applying for internships at home.

"Hannibal?" When he turned, Will couldn't help but grin. He had a brilliant memory for faces, and Hannibal's rarely left his thoughts, but seeing him here, in person again after months apart thrilled him. "I thought you were heading into pre-med?"

"I've taken psychology as an elective," Hannibal replied, moving his jacket from the seat beside him so Will could sit down. "I thought you were in sociology."

"Criminology," Will corrected him with an amused shrug when Hannibal looked askance. "I changed my mind over the break."

"You'd do well in forensics," Hannibal noted. "The sciences were always your area of expertise."

Will ducked his head sheepishly. He'd never have thought Hannibal was paying attention, at least not enough to know Will's particular strengths. Not like Will, who could probably have calculated the exact amount of Hannibal's scholarships, given how much he knew about him.

"It was suggested by an advisor," Will explained. "I'm told I have a knack for empathising with people. Most people."

"That's the true key to any career. Understand the people you work with, or for, and often the rest is irrelevant."

Before Will could say anything in response, the professor began to speak. There wasn't much time after that to chat, and Hannibal had never been the type to pass notes, so instead, Will indulged in his old hobby of Hannibal-watching.

Hannibal had grown even taller, somehow. He was broad-shouldered and still slicked all his hair back and out of his eyes. Will felt a pang of longing he stamped down as hard as he could.

After the class finished, Will offered a standard ‘well I guess I’ll see you around’ to his maddening high school crush, and Hannibal returned the sentiment.

But they *did* see each other around.

After the first week, they’d finally exchanged numbers, had made plans to sit together over shared coffee breaks, caught glimpses of the other going to their classes.

A month in, Will invited Hannibal to a talk in the library that was pertinent to his field of study but not Hannibal’s. A few days after that, Hannibal returned the favor and Will found himself morbidly fascinated by medieval anatomical art.

They had more in common than either had anticipated during their high school years, and yet neither made an effort to push their relationship beyond friendly interaction. Hannibal worried that should he show interest, Will would flee. Will panicked that no one in their right mind would want to be romantically involved with someone as mentally damaged as he was.

But both thought. And both pined. And both ached. And in the end it was Will who showed his hand, by absolute accident one morning when he entered their shared class to find Hannibal damn near pinned to a wall by another young man who was blatantly showing his enthusiastic interest that Hannibal was clearly not returning.

Hannibal, being much more polite than Will thought he reasonably should be, considering, hadn’t told the guy to shove it. Instead, he stood poised and patient, a plastic smile on his face as his eyes sought for help and found none incoming.

So Will went in guns blazing.

“Hannibal!” dark eyes that warmed at seeing Will, that immediately narrowed in that way that suggested genuine pleasure. Will grinned, getting close enough before reaching out to wrap an arm around Hannibal’s neck and tug him close for a kiss on the cheek. “Traffic was murder. Sorry I’m late. Who’s this?”

If Hannibal was surprised, he wore it well. He was impeccably smooth, in fact, sliding an arm around Will’s waist to tug him close.

“An associate of mine,” Hannibal explained. “Franklyn and I share a few general courses.”

“Gotta love brains,” Franklyn chirped, “Useful for all sorts of majors.” His cheery voice was at odds with the look of absolute devastation on his face as he honed in on the hand at Will’s waist.

Hannibal nodded patiently, turning his face back towards Will. “I was just explaining that I unfortunately don’t have any extra time for a study group.”

“Oh of course not,” Will agreed immediately. “Between your class schedule and my work schedule, we get so little time together as it is. I’m sure Franklyn understands, don’t you, Franklyn?”

Faced with a sudden double resistance, Franklyn had no choice but to nod. Will gave him a sympathetic smile.

“But if you’re concerned about the upcoming test, Hannibal and I can email you our notes.”

Franklyn’s head moved in a strange half-nod-half-shake motion before he shrugged and moved to take his seat in the lecture theatre. Will turned his head against Hannibal’s shoulder and looked up at him.

“How long were you trapped for?” He murmured. Hannibal’s laugh was felt rather than heard.

“A solid thirteen minutes if the clock behind him was anything to go by.”

Will snorted. “He seems nice.”

“Very.” Hannibal agreed. “Almost too nice.”

They remained standing close, Hannibal’s arm still around Will’s middle, Will still pressed close. Neither moved. Neither wanted to. And Will wondered for just a moment how nice it would be if this weren’t an act, if this was just how they *were* together. Was it really so hard to ask for it? Was it really so impossible?

“We should sit down.” Will suggested after a while. Hannibal’s hand squeezed in gentle possessiveness around his waist before he hummed.

“We should.”

But even then they didn’t move, not immediately. And when they did, neither was paying much attention to the lecture on the nervous system. Will, for his part, was thinking about how close they were sitting, and how should he move closer he would feel Hannibal’s warmth against his clothes again. Hannibal was trying not to breathe, because if he did he’d catch a ghost of the smell Will had pressed against him and he would lose his mind.

In the end, Will was the braver of the two once more, and dropped his hand innocuously to the bench between them. Hannibal managed to wait two slides before resting his own atop.

Will could feel his own heartbeat behind his teeth, like a wild laugh he could barely contain. Hannibal’s fingers curved around his. They were calloused, artist’s fingers. Surgeon’s fingers. Slowly, Will rotated his hand until his was palm up.

Hannibal laced their fingers together.

Will had no idea what the teacher taught that day. He took no notes. For over an hour, he sat there, daydreaming, feeling the warmth of Hannibal’s hand in his.

Hannibal, for his part, managed notes. They were less diligent than usual, and at one point he may have trailed off entirely to think of the warmth in Will's eyes when he smiled at him, but they existed. When the class was dismissed, neither of them moved. They sat side by side, not looking at each other.

"So," Hannibal finally said, "About that work schedule."

"Not as awful as I made it sound," Will admitted. "I don't work today?"

When he turned, their noses bumped together. He didn't know when Hannibal had leaned in, but suddenly they were sharing the same air. Hannibal chuckled, cupping Will's jaw with his hand. It was trembling as badly as Will's was.

Will felt giddy, like he was at the top of a roller coaster about to plunge down into an endless series of loops. He turned his face into Hannibal's hand, and went when Hannibal guided him closer, and parted his lips to feel Hannibal's against them. And then he had no idea what was happening because it didn't matter.

Hannibal was kissing him and he was just as gentle as Will had imagined, countless times in countless scenarios, daydreaming and night dreaming and aching for him.

When they parted, Will grinned, drawing his teeth over his bottom lip as he watched Hannibal through hooded eyes.

"I've had a crush on you since tenth grade," he admitted in a whisper, and the sound Hannibal made had Will leaning deeper into their next kiss, letting go of Hannibal's hand to set both of his to his face instead, turning in his seat to shove his knee against the back of the bench so they were face to face.

A door slammed somewhere and they broke apart again, forcing themselves to come back down to earth. Even though they didn't want to, neither wanted anything but to stay right here together.

"You finish at five," Hannibal said. It wasn't a question. Will grinned, nodded. "I live off campus."

"I know."

"I'll text you the address."

"You better."

"And see you at six."

"Good."

One more kiss, lingering, and they parted, going their separate ways just outside the door.

Hannibal cooked. It was what he did. Some people drew or listened to music to calm their anxieties. Hannibal cooked.

He had no idea what Will liked. He'd survived high school on paper bag lunches of white bread sandwiches and single serving chip bags, food Hannibal had never touched in his life. Best to have options, so that if Will was picky, there'd be *something* for him.

If Will was picky, it would *kill* Hannibal.

Hannibal's little apartment didn't have much room in the kitchen, but it had enough. Hannibal roasted potatoes, sautéed vegetables, baked tarts that were more trouble than they were worth. By the time Will knocked at his door, at exactly six o'clock, the apartment smelled like a restaurant.

It didn't *look* like one, but there was only so much Hannibal could do about the two-person Formica table.

Will hadn't dressed up, and Hannibal found himself relieved. He didn't need Will to dress up. He couldn't imagine Will dressed up. Will was perfect the way he was and seeing him at his door, smiling that crooked little half smile had Hannibal's chest tightening with warmth.

"Hello, Will."

"Hi," Will grinned and stepped through the door. He caught Hannibal's tie - because of course he was still wearing a fucking tie - and yanked him close and kissed him. Inhibition gone, confidence allowed to bloom throughout the day after holding hands with Hannibal and kissing him and having his feelings reciprocated.

Hannibal was happy to kiss him back.

"You made dinner."

"I made dinner," Hannibal smiled. "But I fear you may not have an appetite."

"Oh I'm starving," Will assured him, but his smile was wicked. "But I won't humiliate myself with a terrible porn pun right now."

Hannibal laughed, warm, and drew his knuckles over Will's cheek, thumb against his lips. "Dinner will keep."

"Thank God," Will grinned, stepping closer. "Because I'll admit now, I have no idea what I'm doing. I just know I want to do it with you."

"I'm afraid I'm in much the same boat."

"You're kidding." Will blinked, then shook his head. "No way. *You?*"

"Me," Hannibal said with a small smile. "There was never anyone who seemed suitable."

Will's eyes narrowed. "But everyone always said.... Alana Bloom."

“Just a very good friend.”

“Bedelia Du Maurier.”

“Likewise.”

“ *Chiyoh* .”

“-Is my cousin,” Hannibal finished, laughing. “Will, is it so hard to believe that I was waiting for you?”

“Yes,” Will said firmly. He looked slightly awestruck, though, and when he reached for Hannibal’s hand, his own was gentle. “We’ll figure it out together, then?”

Hannibal brought Will’s hand up to his lips, brushing a kiss across the knuckles. “Together.”

Kissing was the easy part. Kissing they had both at least attempted before. And now that they were safely in Hannibal's apartment, no roommates to walk in on them, no lecture hall about to fill with students, they took their time to learn to kiss each other properly.

Hannibal's experience with men went as far as his search history. So did Will's. Anatomically things made sense, but neither had actually, ever, had another touch them the way they'd fantasized about. Not yet, anyway.

"I thought you and Beverly were together for a while," Hannibal mused, working open Will's shirt as the other snorted.

"Very good friends," he deadpanned, imitating Hannibal. "No I... I think I was always waiting for you too."

Shirts were tossed to the floor, along with Hannibal's tie, belts got stuck in belt loops. Legs got stuck in pants. Both were laughing, giddy and nervous, by the time only their briefs covered them, mouths numb from kissing, hands eager to learn the contours of the other.

"You're trembling," Hannibal whispered, hand spread wide over Will's stomach as he nosed behind his ear. Will grinned, still shy, still sucking his stomach in because this was *Hannibal* and he couldn't be imperfect. Not around him.

"Yeah well, the main star of my nighttime fantasies is touching me."

"What did you imagine?"

"That's not fair!" Will laughed, but he still clung to Hannibal's arm, still tilted his head back for his lips to explore further. After a moment he threw caution to the wind. Because why not. Why the fuck not.

Will's hand moved to Hannibal's wrist and guided his hand down to the waistline of his briefs. "I imagined you teasing me," Will admitted. "Stroking me up until my knees were shaking. Until all I wanted to do was get on my knees and take you into my mouth."

Hannibal sucked in a breath. His fingertips toyed at the band before slipping under it, down past a tidy trail of coarse hair, down, until he could wrap his hand around the heat of Will's cock.

Will shuddered, tucking his head against Hannibal's shoulder. His own hands traveled over Hannibal's chest, teasing over pebbling nipples.

"I thought about your mouth," Hannibal told him, his voice low and gravely. "On mine. Against my skin. I thought about your lips parted on a gasp." He twisted his hand, teasing at the head of Will's cock.

"Oh god," Will moaned. "Lay down, lay down, I have to taste you."

They stumbled together to the bed, tripping over themselves as they hastened into it. Will sprawled over Hannibal, sucking red marks down his chest, hungry for him.

What both lacked in experience, both made up for in enthusiasm. Will sucked the head of Hannibal's cock before he tried taking it into his mouth, his hand wrapping around the length of it he couldn't swallow. Hannibal was uncut, his foreskin strange and interesting for Will to tease.

"There," Hannibal groaned, arching up off the bed as Will sucked the sensitive skin between his lips. "Like that, Will, just like th- *haa* -"

Will grinned and took the instruction to heart. He went between tormenting the head of Hannibal's cock to massaging his balls, to kissing up the length of him until his cheeks were a mess of his own spit and Hannibal's precome. It was the best kind of filthy. Will's entire body shivered with the thought of what he looked like.

When he leaned back and up over Hannibal again, the other had little care for the mess. He kissed Will deep, took the taste of himself from him and *moaned*. Will dropped his hips to rub down against Hannibal's, their cocks slippery and too-sensitive between them. They wouldn't last long like this, either of them.

"Hannibal," Will barely managed his name before the older boy had him pinned to the bed instead, straddling Will's form and catching his hands beneath Will's knees to spread him open. Will blinked up at him, eyes wide, a corona of blue lining the blown iris. Hannibal didn't move for a moment, just stared at the boy spread out beneath him, taking in every inch of blush-warmed skin. He licked his lips when Will's cock twitched against his belly and bent to give it a single teasing lick.

"Will, I want to -"

"Yes."

Hannibal laughed. "Will you let -"

"Yes," Will groaned. "Just... tell me you have something."

"Top drawer."

“ *God.* ”

Will couldn't move fast enough. He rolled onto his stomach to fumble through the bedside table, hands shaking as Hannibal draped himself along his back. Hannibal's hands were everywhere, stroking Will's cock, sliding up to tease at his nipples, even a detour to cup Will's throat, just for a moment, just to feel him breathe.

“I can't believe we're doing this,” Will said, shoving at Hannibal until he could roll to face him once more.

“We don't have to,” Hannibal said, even as he snatched the little jar from Will's fingers.

“Hannibal,” Will said, his voice and face entirely serious, “I have waited *three years* for this. If you don't get inside me in the next five minutes, I might actually die of grief.”

“They haven't covered that in any of my classes yet,” Hannibal teased. Will snorted, falling back onto the bed and spreading his knees around Hannibal.

“You're fairly clever, I'm sure you'll figure it out.”

“Might take more than five minutes,” Hannibal warned, though his smile was as amused as Will's was. Will just bit his lip.

“Well you'd better get started then.”

It did take longer than five minutes, and in the end Will was very grateful for the patience Hannibal showed in working two fingers into him until he was absolutely breathless. Will knew he probably looked like an idiot, grabbing at the sheets, whimpering Hannibal's name, damn near coming all over himself when Hannibal found his prostate and stroked up against it. In that moment he didn't care. He allowed himself not to care. Because Hannibal looked at him like he was the most beautiful thing in the world and Will *felt it* .

When Hannibal finally stroked himself with slippery fingers and lined up against Will's entrance, both were breathless. Both just looked at each other and nowhere else. As the pressure got a little painful, Will winced, and Hannibal kissed beneath his eye, humming a wordless apology as he adjusted his angle and tried again.

It was awkward, and slippery, and messy, and fun. When Hannibal was in deep, holding Will close with a hand in his hair, Will was grinning like a fool and pawing at Hannibal's chest eagerly.

“You gotta move,” he sighed. “Fuck, Hannibal, please move before I come just from this.”

“You're welcome to come just from this.”

“Fuck you,” Will laughed, turning his head away with a gasp when Hannibal pulled back just a little and thrust back in, his own voice breaking a little.

“Perhaps in the morning.”

Will swatted at him, halfhearted. He could barely breathe, filled up with *Hannibal* , with everything he'd wanted for years. He arched his back for the next thrust, meeting Hannibal with a small moan.

"Like that," he said, fumbling for Hannibal's slippery hand, "just like that."

They clung to each other, Hannibal's free hand twisted up in Will's curls, pulling his body into a bend that was sinful. He mouthed at Will's clavicle, tasted the skin that had tempted him for so many years.

"I can't," He warned. Will moaned softly and dragged him into a kiss.

"Then don't. Hannibal, you feel-" he trailed off into a sob as Hannibal thrust sharply forward.

"You too," Hannibal whispered. His eyes were wet. Will arched beneath him, beautiful and bare and *here* with him.

Hannibal came first, pushing deep into Will and catching his lips in a sloppy slippery kiss. Will kissed back, eyes closed, brows furrowed, muscles tense in the most blissful way. When Hannibal let him breathe, he whimpered, entirely on edge, so overcome by the fact that this *happened* , that Hannibal wanted him, that they could do this again, together, whenever they wanted.

And oh, he wanted. He wanted *badly* .

Hannibal was kissing him again, stroking Will's hair, whispering sweet words that made Will shiver. When Hannibal slipped a hand between them and wrapped it around Will's cock, Will cried out and came hard, making a mess between them as Hannibal stroked him through.

God it felt good. It felt sinfully good.

"Do you have any idea how beautiful you are?" Hannibal murmured, and Will found he couldn't help the smile that came to his face. He pressed a hand over it to try and hide it away and hummed.

"I'm a goddamn mess."

"I rather enjoyed making a mess of you," Hannibal told him, kissing against Will's fingers where they covered his mouth. When Will relented and folded them against his palm Hannibal kissed his lips instead.

"Yeah, I can't say I hated that," he mumbled, sighing deep when Hannibal pulled back to look at him. Will grinned up at him and tilted his cheek against his shoulder. "Three years of daydreaming and nothing ever came close."

Hannibal's smile warmed his face and he bent to kiss Will's forehead. "You're a sap."

"I am," Will agreed, groaning when Hannibal pulled out of him, stretching out on the bed and welcoming Hannibal against him when the other lay over Will once more. "And you're stuck

with me now.”

“Am I?”

A smile stretched Hannibal’s lips, wider than any Will had seen on him before. Will grinned back at him, nuzzling their noses together giddily.

“Of course. If that’s what you give me when you’ve got no idea what you’re doing, I can’t wait to see who you are with practice.”

Hannibal rolled his eyes. Will reached up to trace his cheekbone with the pad of his thumb.

“I feel really stupid for not saying something sooner,” he admitted.

“We have now,” Hannibal said. “And tomorrow. And the days after that.”

“And every day until you get sick of me,” Will told him. “And then probably a few more even then.”

“I don’t think I could ever get sick of you,” Hannibal admitted. The raw honesty in his voice stilled Will, and he tilted his head to properly look at Hannibal.

“Me either,” he said softly.

They didn’t.

End Notes

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